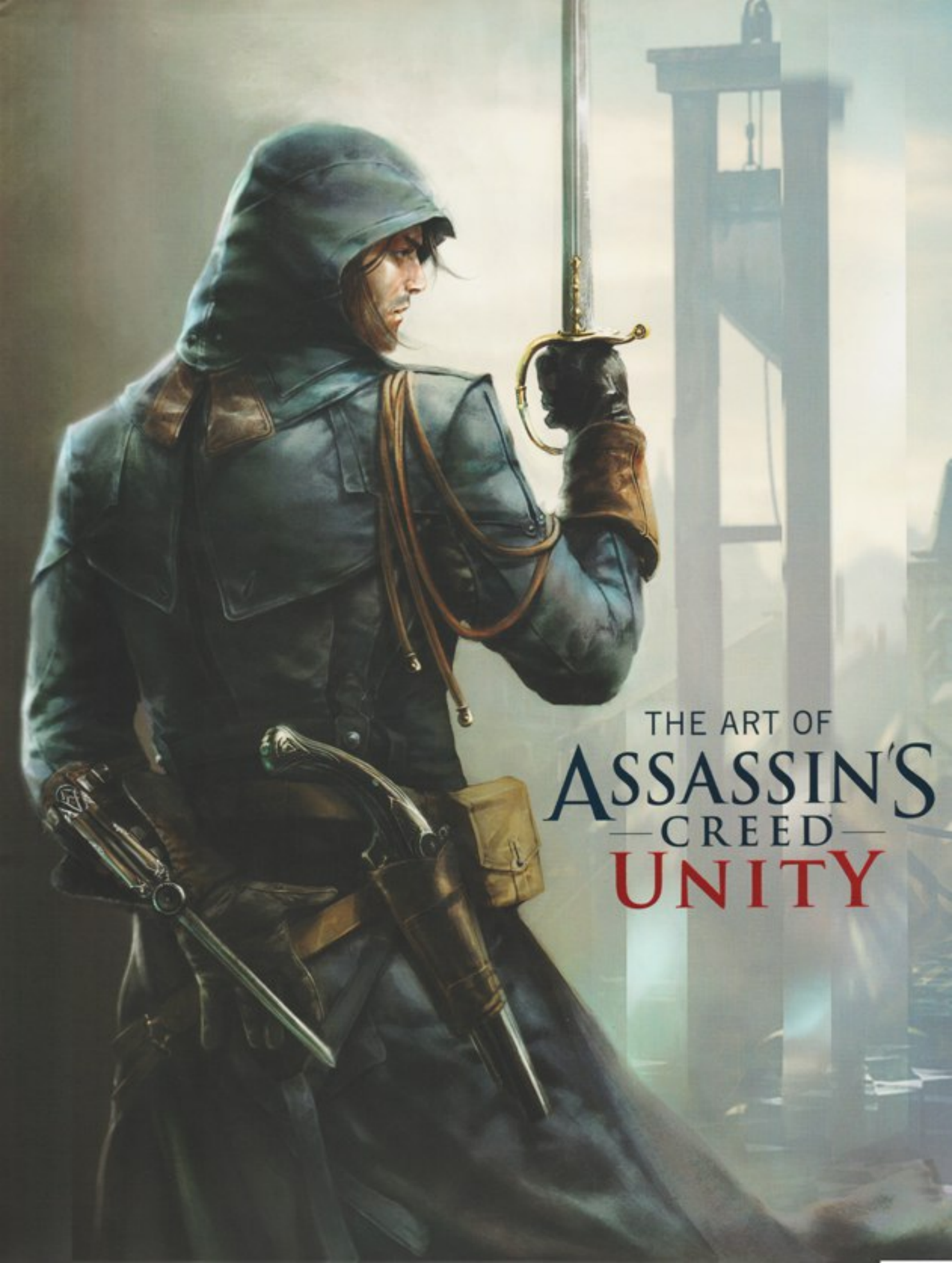
THE ART OF
ASSASSIN'S
CREED
UNITY

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THE ART OF ASSASSIN'S CREED® UNITY

PAUL DAVIES

FOREWORD BY
MOHAMED GAMBOUZ

TITAN BOOKS

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FOREWORD BY
MOHAMED GAMBOUZ

MY GOAL ON *ASSASSIN'S CREED UNITY* WAS TO CREATE AN IMMERSIVE AND EMOTIONALLY INVOLVING VISUAL EXPERIENCE, WHERE PHOTO-REALISM AND STYLISATION BLEND WITH EACH OTHER TO ACHIEVE A BELIEVABLE WORLD AND CHARACTERS WITH PERSONALITY.

As visual ingredients I based the Art Direction on: Light – Smoke – Decay – Color, each serving a key aspect characterising the kind of setting we wanted to depict: Hope – Chaos – Ageing – Richness.

A certain attention was given to light specifically, and thanks to Next-Gen capabilities and our Anvil in-house Engine, we were able to push the boundaries.

The Paris we wanted to depict is a monumental, dramatic and alive city, with lots of character and a story to tell in almost every corner. With texture all over the place, whether it's decaying walls or filthy street grounds, lot of visual contrasts coexist. Contrasts established by the gap between social classes, giving a large palette of materials from crumbled painted stucco to lavish golden ornament. The contexts of the revolution inspired us to aim for a dominant moody and heavy atmosphere where, on pictorial level, smoke puffs almost mix up with thick clouds in the sky.

This book holds a selection of artworks created along the amazing four years of development, done by a group of talented and passionate artists from our different worldwide studios. I hope you enjoy browsing its pages as much as we enjoyed creating them.

A LONE FIGURE STANDS CONFIDENTLY ASTRIDE A ROOFTOP EDGE, HIGH ABOVE THE HÔTEL DE VILLE TO OBSERVE FROM SAFE DISTANCE. THOUGH INEXTRICABLY LINKED TO EVENTS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION, THE ASSASSIN ARNO DORIAN IS BOTH PHYSICALLY AND METAPHORICALLY DISTANCED FROM THE *ENRAGÉS*.

With history as their playground, Ubisoft artists, in association with narrative and design teams, explore how fiction might weave with significant fact. Chiefly, how their protagonist can become memorable while competing for attention alongside the likes of Napoléon and Robespierre.

In this tale of one city, with repercussions affecting us all even now, the French people's stand for the natural rights of man form the backdrop to Arno's clandestine mission. Ubisoft artists sought to capture the turbulent mood.

FAR LEFT: Early version of Arno in the iconic hood by Remko Troost.

LEFT: Senior artist Vincent Gaigneux's final rendition of our lead protagonist, resplendent in a nobleman's robes and wearing a young man's confident expression. Though still in his early 20s, Arno has already suffered a lifetime of hurt, and his initiation into the Assassin Brotherhood was hard fought. He must appear to be strong, eager and gallant.

BELOW Broad-shouldered and with a certain elegance, Arno's persona as portrayed by his Assassin's wardrobe is as distinct from the rear as in front. While it serves practical purposes of light protection and convenient disguise, artist Vincent Gaigneux wanted the hood to 'say Arno' from any angle.

YOUNG ARNO

ONLY RECENTLY AND tragically orphaned, the young Arno – depicted here aged 8-years old – clutches his father's pocket watch. The timepiece remains symbolic throughout *Assassin's Creed Unity*, poetically serving the narrative on numerous occasions. Scraggy hair suggests a spirited child.

Despite a thirst for adventure and a tendency to find trouble, Arno is impeccably dressed thanks to a kindly foster-family that enjoys a place in high society. And so this concept by artist Remko Troost shows many depths to the youngster's character; his determination, a resolve forged ultimately in great sadness.

ARMING ARNO

CUSTOMIZED WEAPONS AND accessories, often with a ceremonial feel, contribute to the elaborate presentation style throughout *Assassin's Creed Unity*. The pistol pictured above bears the eagle insignia associated with the Assassins, while the rapier sword and sheath look fit for a king.

Below, the Assassin's preferred tool of the trade, a hidden blade, is disguised by a leather gauntlet, decoratively embossed. A heavy jacket and accommodating sleeves would quite tidily complete the concealment.

ABOVE: The look and feel of late 18th century Paris is considered for all objects, which includes the raw materials required to build this iconic Assassin's weapon. The Phantom Blade. Remko Troost chose an ivory and pewter combination to form the mechanism, mounted on an authentic leather glove. Once again the Assassin's eagle motif is present on the belt and pouch arrangement, worn over a sash, which would've been a common sight in Arno's day.

LEFT: These artworks were among the first versions of Arno, designed by Jeff Simpson: a truly 'revolutionary' outfit, complete with tricolore sash that signifies his allegiance to Lafayette's vision of nationalism. There is also a tricolore cockade tucked beneath the lapel, and rather brazenly displayed Brotherhood insignia adorning belts and buckles. With dual hidden blades at the ready, this vision of our hero is absolutely uncompromising.

FREEDOM FIGHTER

CONCEPT ARTISTS ARE asked to provide numerous interpretations of each new Assassin to suit the time period and personalities combined. On this page, the treatment is intended to by heroic; a figure of hope, a man representing passion for the cause and apparent capability to succeed.

It is also necessary for the artists to acknowledge the Assassin's wardrobe heritage, pointing all the way back to the Syrian-born Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad.

PERSONALIZATION

FOR THE CO-OP missions in *Assassin's Creed Unity*, the appearance for each player's custom avatar was explored in many directions, each relevant to the era and occasion. In order to blend in with the radical sans-culottes Arno may appear in a more casual, common attire; that of a merchant, perhaps. With his old and worn riding boots matched with loose-fitting trousers, plain shirt and smart though modest waistcoat, Arno is a man of the people. A solution needed to be reached for the iconic hood, however, which in this case became a loose-fitting headscarf arrangement. Especially when viewed from behind, this is a workman-like look for Arno, and we can imagine a similarly uncomplicated overcoat used to conceal the Assassin's secret equipment. Although given the surly attitude it is possible that this particular Arno could ride out unprotected, no matter what the consequence.

BELOW: Arno as a military commander, sporting a smart long tunic, waistcoat and knee-breeches, cleverly arranged to resemble an Assassin's uniform. There can be no mistaking his nobility though, and a rather humorless expression suggests an uncompromising approach. Subdued tones enforce the seriousness, devoid of celebration, merely pursuing the somber business of death. One might expect this Arno to be a tactical genius a la Napoléon Bonaparte.

ABOVE: Remko Troost explores overtly military regalia for Arno in these three costume designs: high-ranking and pristine swordsman; burly axe-wielder, and ragged pike carrier.

BELOW: More sans-culottes uniforms, adapted to suit a man with his mind set on fighting. Each, bar one, finds a way to incorporate the Assassin's hood and display the nationalistic tricolore. In what appears to be a tailor's ensemble, Arno doesn't look terribly threatening... deceptive, then.

ABOVE: A governor's apparel bestows the desired authority upon Arno. This extraordinarily dapper uniform on the right is not too far removed from French military uniform of the era, and all that's missing is Arno's horse and an officer's cutlass to complete the commanding image. The white hood integrates perfectly.

ARNO'S VILLA

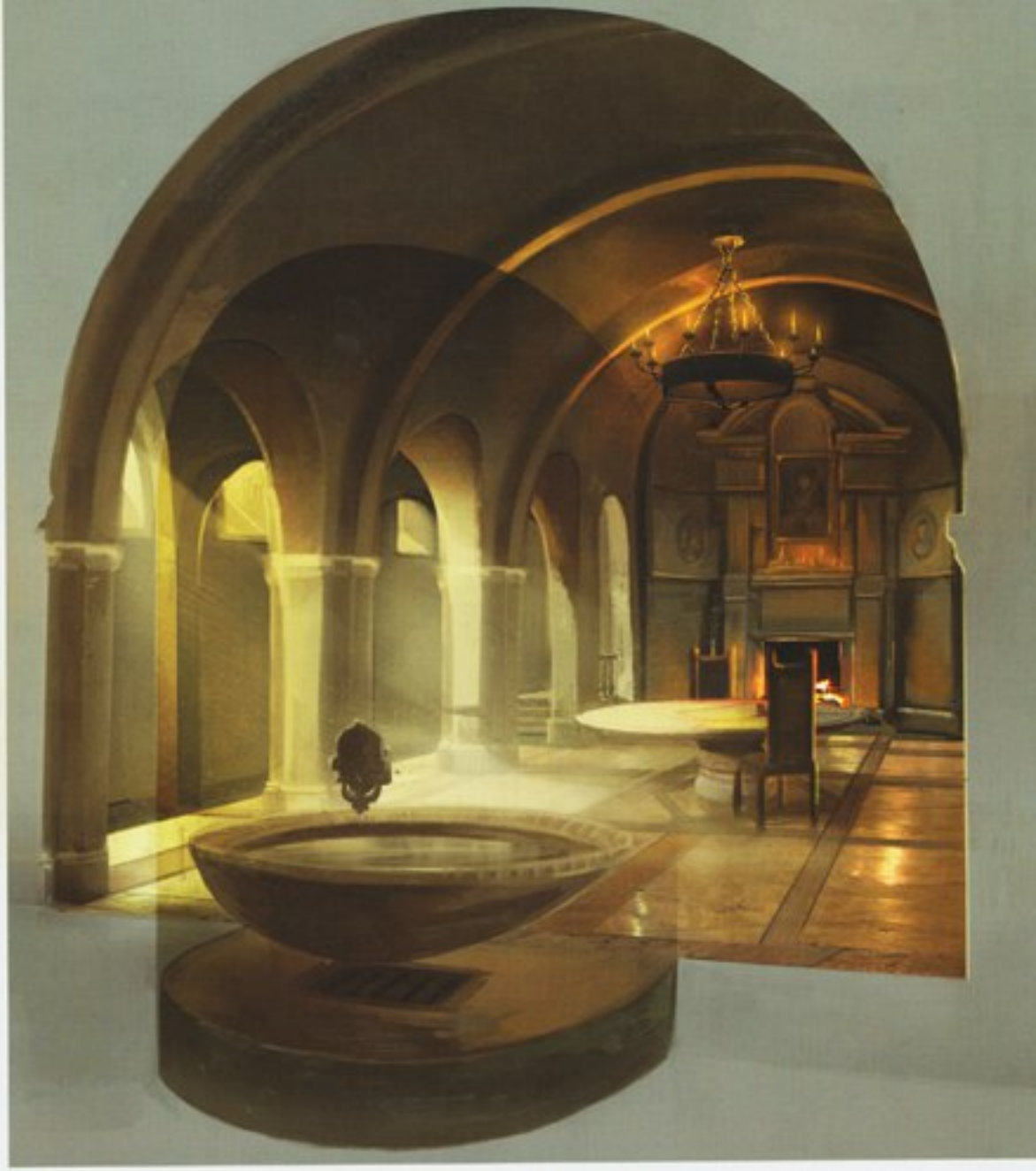
SINCE THE RENOVATION of Ezio Auditore da Firenze's Tuscan retreat, Monteriggioni, in *Assassin's Creed II*, the series' protagonists have enjoyed similar hideaways. Arno's villa in *Assassin's Creed Unity* is located on St. Louis Island, one of two natural islands in the river Seine.

As with Ezio's stronghold, Ratonhnhaké:ton's homestead (*Assassin's Creed III*) and Edward Kenway's tropical island mansion (*Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag*), Arno's villa is found in a state of disrepair. Over time, however, Arno can invest in its reconstruction using wealth acquired during missions. Improvements include a private theatre, which is a similar luxury to that afforded Marie Antoinette in her personal hamlet at Versailles.

LEFT: A quiet scene in which an evidently diligent trainee Assassin takes to some studying by firelight before bedtime. Though well-to-do, this is no ordinary gentleman's apartment however, there are deadly weapons lining the walls too. "The goal was to show a peaceful place where Arno could relax," Gilles Beloeil discloses. "I had to choose a wide angle to be able to give the maximum of information about the setup. I also chose to add details only in the light areas to add some drama."

BELOW: A treasure trove of 18th century artifacts that now belong to Arno, reside in the Trophy Room of his villa. These treasures and awards are secured during the course of many adventures. The concept artists therefore had a colossal task on their hands to ensure that each one of these is worth the effort it took to acquire them; distractions include what appears to be a bust of Napoléon and huge antique vases.

BELOW: Arno's villa show at various stages of is grand refurbishment. Step by step the many rooms are transformed from derelict death traps to safe and sheltered luxury surroundings. These before and after concepts by David (Rez) Alvarez and Pierre Bertin show the dramatic improvements made to the salon, hall and bedroom. The detailed and theatrically lit virtual models encountered by players within the game are based on these early exploratory 'sketches'.



ABOVE: The greater mysteries of the Brotherhood are revealed to Arno during encounters such as these. Ubisoft artists aimed to capture the tantalizing nature of discovery relating to legendary Assassin robes or priceless suits of armor. They were also called upon to suggest complex puzzles that Arno would need to solve in order to release such treasures to him, such as this heavy brass inlaid pedestal. Top left, Arno ponders our fate as written in the stars.

2 ALLIES AND ENEMIES

APPEARANCE AND ALLEGIANCE ARE NOT ALWAYS WHAT THEY FIRST SEEM IN *ASSASSIN'S CREED UNITY*. KNOWLEDGE OF CHARACTERS AND EVENTS IN THE FRENCH REVOLUTION GUIDE OUR EXPECTATIONS, BUT IT'S HOW THE HISTORICAL INTERACTS WITH UBISOFT'S METICULOUS FICTION THAT PROVIDES THE INTRIGUE.

Key players in events that include the first meeting of the Estates General and storming of the Bastille all feature, meanwhile another chapter in the ages-old saga of Assassin versus Templar is written. For Ubisoft, conspiracy theories as old as the revolution provide a foundation.

The French Revolution gave rise to some of the most colorful personalities in history: King Louis XVI, the Marquis de Sade, Maximilien de Robespierre and Napoléon Bonaparte. Ubisoft's imaginary cast needed to at least rival them for charisma.

ÉLISE DE LA SERRE

WITH HER DEVILISH smile and auburn hair, fearlessness aided by an athletic physique, Élise de la Serre is the perfect companion for Arno. Though she is a Templar and Arno is an Assassin, the two of them share a common goal, during the pursuit of which Élise is always one step ahead.

Élise is a noblewoman with rarely much cause to disguise the fact. Therefore her presentation clearly delineates her wealth and Templar roots. She is a very strong personality, equal in every regard to Arno, in particular her desire for justice.

Élise, aged 8, clutching the bright red marble that brings her into contact with Arno for the first time. Artist Remko Troost intentionally has her wearing the same devilish smile as the adult version across the page. Her hands-on-hip pose speaks to her strong-headed personality. Her dress, while wonderfully striking, is mere decoration for a free-spirited individual.

ARNO ACCOMPLICES

OLD AND WISE, fiercely loyal to the Assassin's cause, the man that becomes Arno's mentor is first encountered as a prisoner in the Bastille. Pierre Bellec (right) is the line that Arno is challenged to cross, but usually fails owing to Bellec's combat smarts and tough love approach.

In artist Remko Troost's take on the sagely Assassin, he is shown reunited with Brotherhood livery and hardware. Troost's representation of Honoré Mirabeau (far right) who was a genuine player in the revolution shows how the artists adhere to consistent and credible wardrobes for the era. Fellow fictitious Assassins (left to right) Hervé Quemar, Guillaume Beylier and Sophie Trenet strike valiant poses, weapons at the ready for they are always prepared.

NOTORIOUS

WERE THEY NOT unmistakable historical figures, an ensemble that counts Napoléon Bonaparte, the Marquis de Sade and King Louis XVI among its players could be presumed far-fetched. Artist Remko Troost was able to capture their most celebrated personality traits in a single impactful pose.

The Marquis, real name Donatien Alphonse François de Sade, was among the Bastille prisoners but found his freedom by other means than suggested for the purposes of *Assassin's Creed Unity*. His disheveled appearance is the fabled madman that we expect to meet.

PATRIMONY

BOTH ARNO AND Élise lose their fathers to the hidden war between Assassins and Templars. Charles Dorian (right) and François de la Serre (below left) are the heroes' respective parents; Dorian is described as a 'tall, rangy noble from one of the minor houses'. He is very kind to Arno.

De la Serre is a Templar Grand Master, though his radical approach to the role invites disaster. He is very highly placed in French society, and we are to accept that he has a place among delegates of the First Estate, the nobility, at the famous Estates General meeting of 1789. His carriage suggests a wise and thoughtful man with peaceful intention.

CEREMONY

WHILE PARIS AND soon France erupt in revolutionary fervor, the Assassin and Templar orders continue to observe ceremonial duties. Their struggles date back to biblical times, and so to don the cloak of either faction is cause for solemnity.

After his initiation, Arno (left) is allowed to wear the Assassin's cloak and receive his hidden blade. The hood's eagle-like design is largely unchanged since its 13th century iteration and Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad. Below, the Templar Grand Master is more grandiose and the weaker physicality of the man hints that Templar goals are politically engineered.

TEMPLAR MASTERMINDS

IF IT WERE not for these four inglorious leaders, the French Revolution may not have taken place; this is according to the master-plan as laid out by *Assassin's Creed Unity*. Even the conspiracy theorist and French politician Jean-Joseph Mounier (1758-1806) might've raised an eyebrow.

Only Maximilien Robespierre (below) had a role in the machinations; founder of left-wing Jacobin Club and instrumental during The Terror. He is the sole historic figure.

RIGHT: Chrétien Lafrenière, cult leader of The Light of God with blood on his hands. Priestly robes signify what he may truly believe to be a holy purpose on this earth. The man and his garb appear inseparable from a lifetime of devotion.

LEFT: François Thomas Germain, as you might surmise, is the ultimate ring-leader during this chapter of Assassin versus Templar history. He very artfully, and on one occasion quite theatrically, convinces others to do his bidding to unsettle the Ancien Régime.

BELOW: The Roi des Thunes (King of Beggars), assuming the air of nobility though dressed in rags and smelling of the sewers no doubt; savage ruler of the poor Parisian underworld.

TEMPLAR MISCREANTS

ONE OF THE lesser-known historical figures around the time of the French Revolution was nobleman Charles Gabriel Sivert. It serves the *Unity* narrative to involve Sivert with the entirely unsavory, and fictional, Roi des Thunes (King of Beggars). Their joint role in the plot is pivotal.

The duo collaborates to hasten progress of a new world order on behalf of their Templar master, so their countenance is suitably dark and sinister. The Roi des Thunes' lietenant Aloys La Touche (right) serves the Roi out of fear more than anything else. La Touche becomes a most despicable target, in league with an unspeakably cruel man that exploits the poor and homeless for personal gain.

ABOVE: Part vagabond, part military commander, the Roi des Thunes has valuable connections with the underground in the cour des miracles (court of miracles); the slums of Paris. Artists Remko Troost portrays his minion literally climbing out of the gutter, a pitiful sight were it not for the pistol.

RIGHT: Designing Roman Catholic priest Jacques Roux, Branko Bistrovic explains: "I was tempted to push his gesture and demeanor to extremes but eventually settled for something more refrained."
RIGHT TOP: Patrick Ingoldsby on designing Marcourt: "A very regal but intimidating look that really makes him stand out."
RIGHT BOTTOM: Branko Bistrovic says of Thomas-Alexandre Dumas: "By all accounts, the quintessential soldier."
FAR RIGHT: Théroigne de Méricourt is "a very strong woman with leadership skills – a little bit androgynous," says artist Nacho Yagüe.

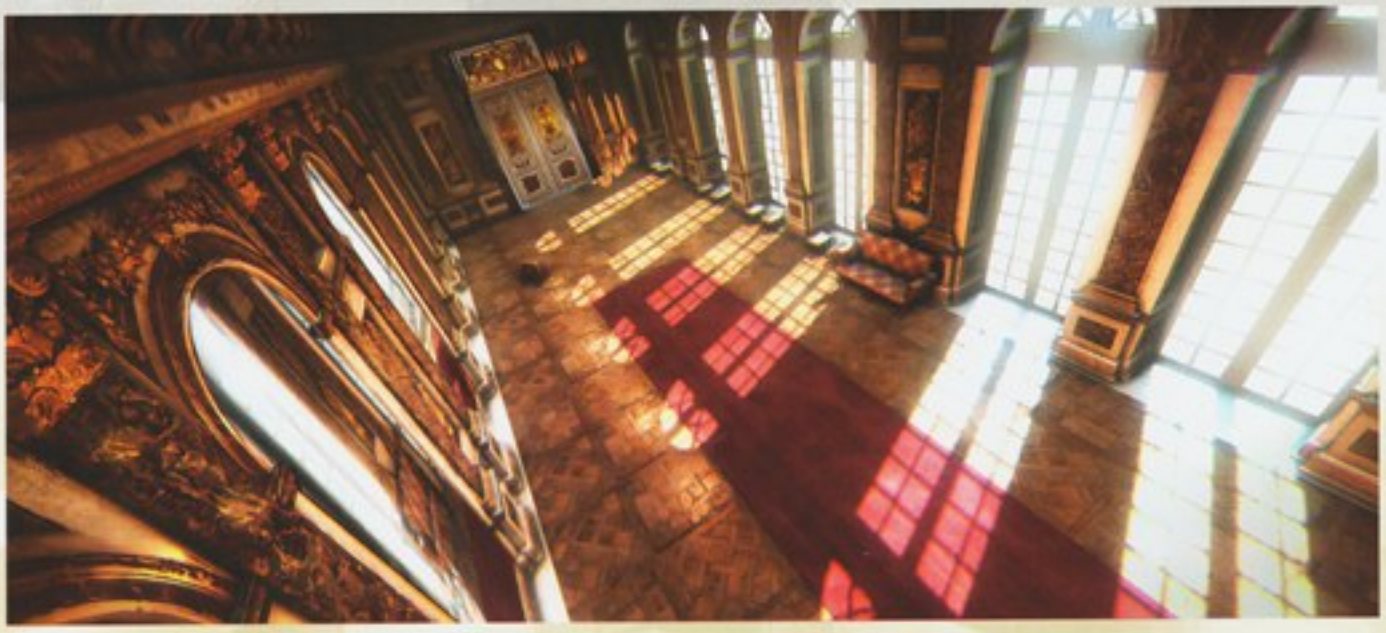
RIGHT: Dynamic sketches explore the essence of a new hero, highly emotive to invoke an at-a-glance response from the design team. It is likely that Arno did not yet have a name at this stage, though his purpose would've been outlined to the concept artists involved. There is much less of the nobility present in this ripped and torn outfit.

THE BROTHERHOOD

THESE ASSASSIN DESIGNS were created by Remko Troost for the *Assassin's Creed Unity* Companion App. They experiment with 18th century French fashion and a figure-hugging look that has proven popular with fans throughout the videogame franchise.

Because each of their roles is distinct, their outfits were required to reflect their character and capabilities. Below, we can admire the integration of an Assassin Brotherhood emblem on this ranger's hat and agree that he would make a powerful adversary.

Here is a trio of enemy archetypes, from left to right: turtle, stealth and heavy aggressors. They each perform different roles in battles, encountered as a group or individually. Their silhouettes and movement are intended to be dead giveaways even if observed from a distance, so that wary Assassins can make a tactical approach and know what to expect. Artistic license is used to bring these unique enemies to life.



VERSAILLES

PEACEFUL OPULENCE AS CAPTURED IN THE SCENE ABOVE WOULD NOT REMAIN FOR LONG. ARNO IS ENTIRELY AT EASE IN SUCH SURROUNDINGS, UNAWARE OR UNCONCERNED BY THE DISCONTENT BREWING AMONG THE COMMON PEOPLE. THESE SCENE-SETTING SKETCHES ELEGANTLY DESCRIBE THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM.

"Here is Arno caught ogling and flirting with Elise's painting, in Monsieur de la Serre's dining room," concept artist Stéphane Turgeon recounts. "We have a simple aristocratic setting from that time, very inspired by Versailles, the manor being set near Versailles' palace."

The following pages tell part of the tale of how the divide between the rich and poor was crossed. During which a king and his notorious queen were swiftly evicted from their monument to the Ancien Régime, centuries in the making.

RIGHT: Concept work is not just imagining how everything should look, but in the fullest sense what it means to be present. Stéphane Turegon: "Monsieur de la Serre's house in the evening. Arno must deliver a letter that he doesn't know will change the course of his existence. We chose simple time-appropriate decoration, and slightly damp atmosphere of a chilly evening."

BELOW: The role of concept artist is sometimes to help direct an experience. Explains Stéphane Turgeon: "This amusing sketch describes the common room of blacksmith brothers Victor and Hugo. Arno, who came there to repossess his watch lost gambling, is surprised by one of them and has to run before getting his face smashed. Otherwise the room just shows a simple country house."

FAR LEFT: "Since the beginning we put the emphasis on the contrast between the rich society and the rest of the population," says Ludovic Ribardière. "To this end we aimed to show the frivolity and the luxury of a party in the Palace of Versailles."

LEFT: "This imagery is based on the contrast between so much luxury and culture, destroyed within a few minutes by an angry crowd. Always an interesting feeling to imagine..."
Ludovic Ribardière

RANSACK

LUDOVIC RIBARDIÈRE'S DRAMATIC and carefully symbolic visualizations of the aftermath at Versailles convey a tremendous sense of upheaval. Untold wealth in terms of belongings and artistic value quite simply trashed and exposed to the elements; an open wound.

Even so the mood remains light-hearted within the team, whose approach to the task of capturing the French Revolution on virtual canvas becomes almost like method acting – imagining yourself to be of that time, the sights, the sounds... the smells. "Ah French food!!!" jokes Ludovic. "The best in the world ! Okay, maybe because I'm French."

ÎLE DE LA CITÉ

WITH THE CONCIERGERIE, SAINTE-CHAPELLE AND NOTRE DAME AMONG ITS EXQUISITE MONUMENTS, THE ÎLE DE LA CITÉ OFFERS UBISOFT'S ARTISTS SUCH A WEALTH TO EXPLORE. BOTH INSIDE AND OUT, THESE ARE AMONG THE MOST LAVISH LOCATIONS IN THE WORLD, REWARDING THOSE WITH AN EYE FOR DETAIL.

Just as the game revels in richer characterization than popular misquotes of the era will give you, we are encouraged to meander off the beaten track in search of behind-the-scenes venues. The Île de la Cité is where Arno hunts down the Assassin's mystery headquarters, for example.

Artist Maxime Desmettre on how his work (left) aims to inspire awe: "I wanted to depict the crowded aspect of the quay area at the Pont Neuf section of the river. The water level is purposely low to give more scale to the bridge."

ABOVE: Headless bodies draped in shrouds are transported down river to fill the mass graves. The splendor of Notre Dame appears spectral in the mist.

RIGHT: By the time of the French Revolution in 1793 Paris had begun building cemeteries on the outskirts of the city. Decapitated victims of The Terror, including Marie Antoinette, were buried in huge, unmarked mass graves. Carved gravestones shown in these concepts are artistically chosen to weep for the dead as dramatic commentary. Other ideas explored here are significant graves defiled, such as those supposedly containing aristocrats and kings.

BEAUTY AND TRAGEDY

PARIS AT THE time of the French Revolution showed signs of turbulence in all quarters. For *Assassin's Creed Unity*, this means that Paris is compelling in a way that previous cities in the series were not. "There is a story on almost each square meter," says Art Director Mohamed Gambouz.

"Paris of the French revolution is a very rich, dense city. There is texture all over the place whether it's decaying walls or filthy streets," Gambouz continues. "The context of the revolution inspired us to aim for a moody and heavy atmosphere. On a pictorial level, smok puffs combine with thick clouds of the sky."

ABOVE: "It was interesting to revisit some of the famous places of Paris two hundred years earlier," enthuses Ludovic Ribardière. Visitors to Paris in the 21st century feel blessed by Notre Dame, awed by the old Conciergerie. Yet both were scenes of horror, the latter a huge antechamber for the guillotine. Pont Saint-Michel was the last medieval bridge in Paris to boast houses, which remained until 1808.

RIGHT: Although people, places and dates are officially recorded for the key events in the French Revolution, concept stage is where the 'what if' contingency is allowed to fuel design creativity. Ludovic Ribardière: "Some places, such as the Cathedral Notre-Dame de Paris, are great for the action sequences. The hugeness of these kinds of places is perfect to imagine epic battles and scenes of destruction." Bell-tower assassination sadly didn't make the final cut.

ABOVE: Guillotine under construction, supervised by the blue coats of the newly appointed National Guard. Tricolore flags lining the streets immediately tell us that this is the time of the Revolution, the traitors' house fires are still burning.

THE PERFECT STORM

"BEING EXCLUSIVELY 'NEXT-gen' had a big influence on our choices since the beginning," says Mohamed Gambouz of the latest gaming consoles from Sony and Microsoft, plus high-performance PCs. "Because of the new hardware capabilities they offer greater artistic freedom and potential."

"During conception I structured the art direction around two aspects: artistic treatment/style and the pursuit of imagery that obviously looked next-gen. I pushed a mix of realism to increase believability and immersion, and stylization to give it some emotion and personality. Firstly I promoted inspiration from atmospheric movies like Tom Tykwer's *Perfume*. In the second and toughest aspect I gave the team three key pillars to prioritize in order to clearly convey a next-gen statement: Light, smoke and decay."

BELOW: Notre Dame did not escape the French Revolution unscathed. Many of her 12th century statues were destroyed and her 13th century spire dismantled. Gilles Beloeil's imagining of Arno spying on a corrupt priest (bottom of page) is another example of lighting effects as a valuable part of the experience in *Assassin's Creed Unity*, highlighting the stained glass windows.

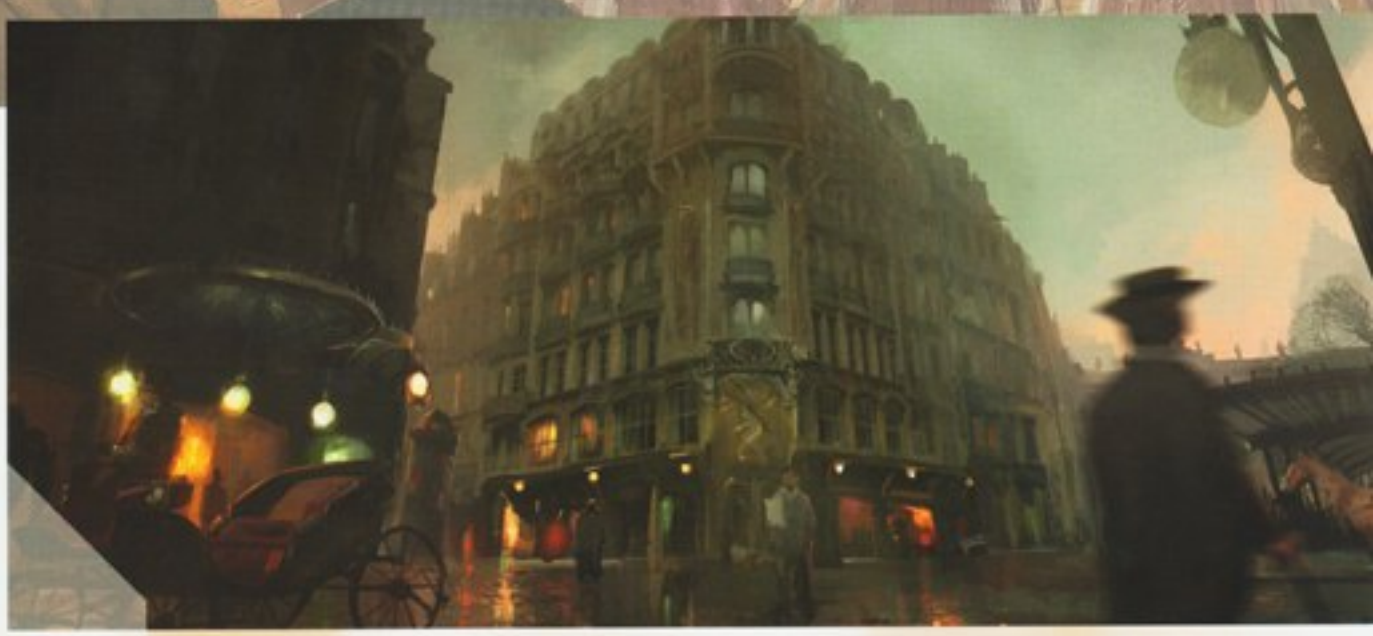
WORKING WITH SPACE

A ROMAN CATHOLIC procession (above), as sketched by Gilles Beloeil, winds through the uneven streets of the Île de la Cité. Meanwhile Beloeil's beautifully lit 'Notre Dame interior' (top) shows how the revolutionaries still valued religion, albeit on more agreeable terms.

Stéphane Turgeon's 'The Death of Mirabeau' (right), is a murder-mystery: "The main difficulty for this concept was space, which is too big and empty for a unique point of view. I tried various POVs to get an angle that showed everything and used the light to show details related to the enigma, scattered in the open space."

ABOVE: "I did this illustration early during the production. It was done to set the mood and inspire the team for this sequence. On the first version Arno was a bit different; I painted him wearing a white coat. I had to repaint it immediately after the final design of Arno was approved. The feeling is now different because on the first version, Arno was the light shape over a dark background. Now he is more blended but I think the result doesn't suffer too much." *Gilles Beloeil*

LEFT TO RIGHT: "After the concept art shown above was approved I did this 'paintover' to set up the lighting. Originally the light comes from the right, but Mohamed Gambouz liked it better from the left. In the final paintover I added smoke and light to show the team how we should push the visual quality." *Gilles Beloeil*



ANOMALY: BELLE ÉPOQUE

"THE MODERN ERAS BRING INTERESTING NEW VISUAL ASPECTS TO *ASSASSIN'S CREED*, PUSHED AS FAR AS WE CAN," SAYS MOHAMED GAMBOUZ. "ARTIFICIAL LIGHTING, WITH ALL THE COLORS THIS BRINGS; ICONOGRAPHY THROUGH COMMERCIAL AND PROPAGANDA POSTERS, AND SIGNAGE USING ART NOUVEAU AND ART DECO TYPOGRAPHY."

"The Belle Époque was an absolute pleasure to work on conceptually," adds Patrick Ingoldsby, Art Director at Ubisoft Toronto. "This period in history enjoyed a visual revolution of its own: formatted yet organic expressions in architecture with Art Nouveau, the industrial explosion of the steam era affecting manufacture, and the liberating emergence of electricity. All of these movements allowed us rich channels to present another visual side of this city that Paris was famous for."

TOUT PARIS

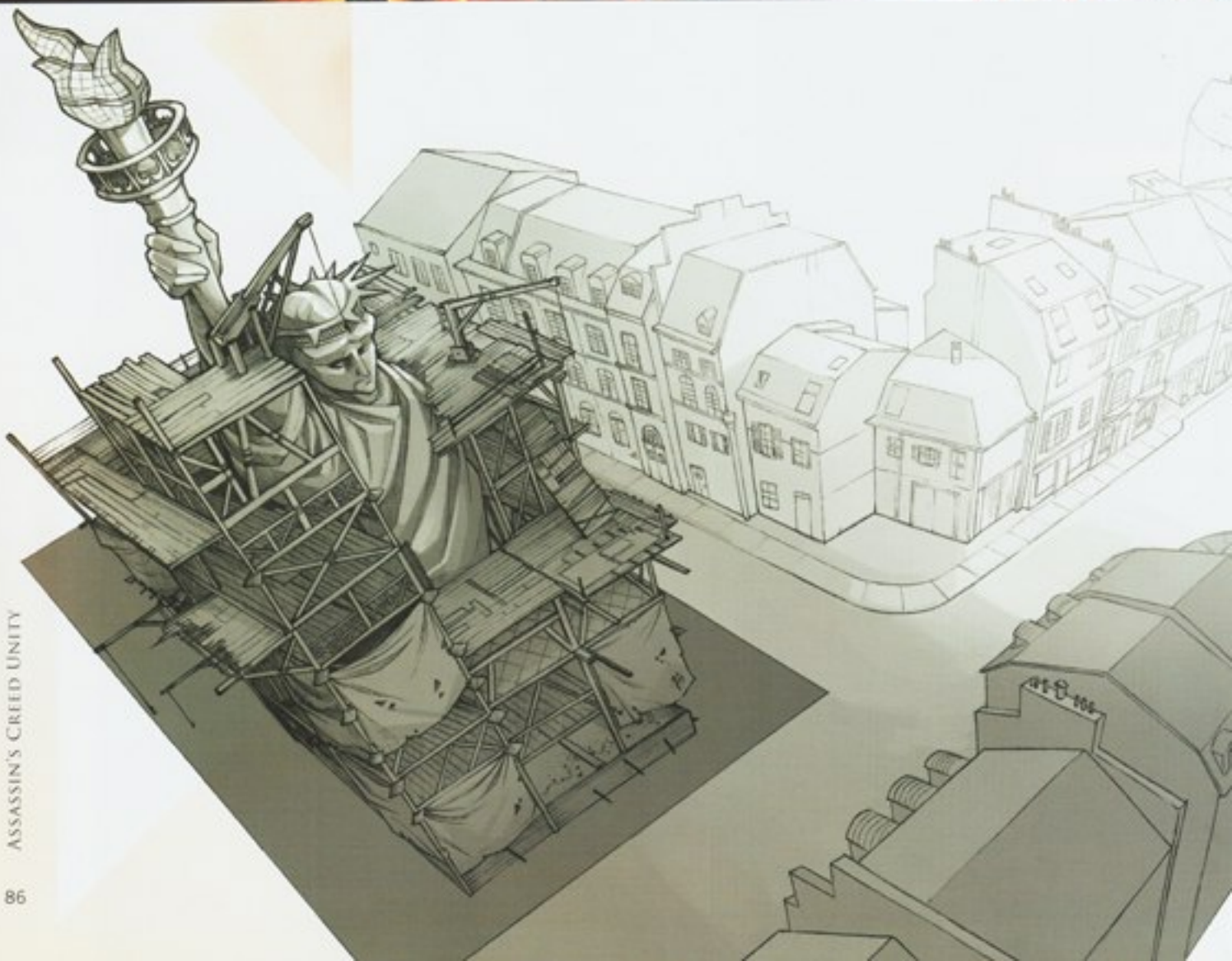
"LIGHTING IN THAT period of Paris opened up a world for night life. The focus is on the streets where people socialize deep into the night. We wanted the lighting approach of this period to visualize a magical and intoxicating dream world, Paris during a golden era." *Patrick Ingoldsby*

"I experimented with a different palette, which involved using a lot of color and pastel tones but in a cloudy/rainy mood. Our goal in the Belle Époque period was to achieve richer and brighter shade variation, different from the other periods. Even in a cloudy mood my intention was to add hints of richer hues." *Nacho Yagüe*

RIGHT: Assassin's Creed Unity spans four eras, overlapping in places due to the fleeting way that memories work, and the premise that the 'game' is a very high-end consumer 'simulation'. The French Revolution is our main focus, with glimpses of the Belle Époque, World War II and Medieval periods. Gilles Beloeil worked on two concepts of the city, romantically incorporating all four time segments – one explosive, the other tranquil.

ABOVE: "Color choices had to be more jubilant for this period. That gave the concept crews a good range to use for key accents in our props and dressings. The vibrancy reflects the spirit of progression, prosperity of the bourgeoisie and the decadence of entertainment." *Patrick Ingoldsby*

OPPOSITE: "The Belle Epoque was a period of great invention, and I tried to find some impressive ways to combine the inventions with the skills of our Assassin." *Ludovic Ribardière*



TOP: "The inclusion of the symbol of Liberty herself being built in Paris was a concept all the visual directors shared excitement for. Capturing the nature of how her new surface would have looked at the time provided us with an early testing ground for realism in our rendering technology, and with breathtaking results."
Patrick Ingoldsby

LEFT: "One characteristic from the Belle Époque is beautifully hand painted advertisement signs everywhere. The ghettos are far from the beautiful rich areas, but very interesting in contrast. The piece below was part of a mood board defining color and light for different missions. For this one I wanted strong light hitting the upper part of the buildings, keeping ground level a little darker. Suddenly seeing a shining Statue of Liberty should be an amazing experience." *Nacho Yagüe*

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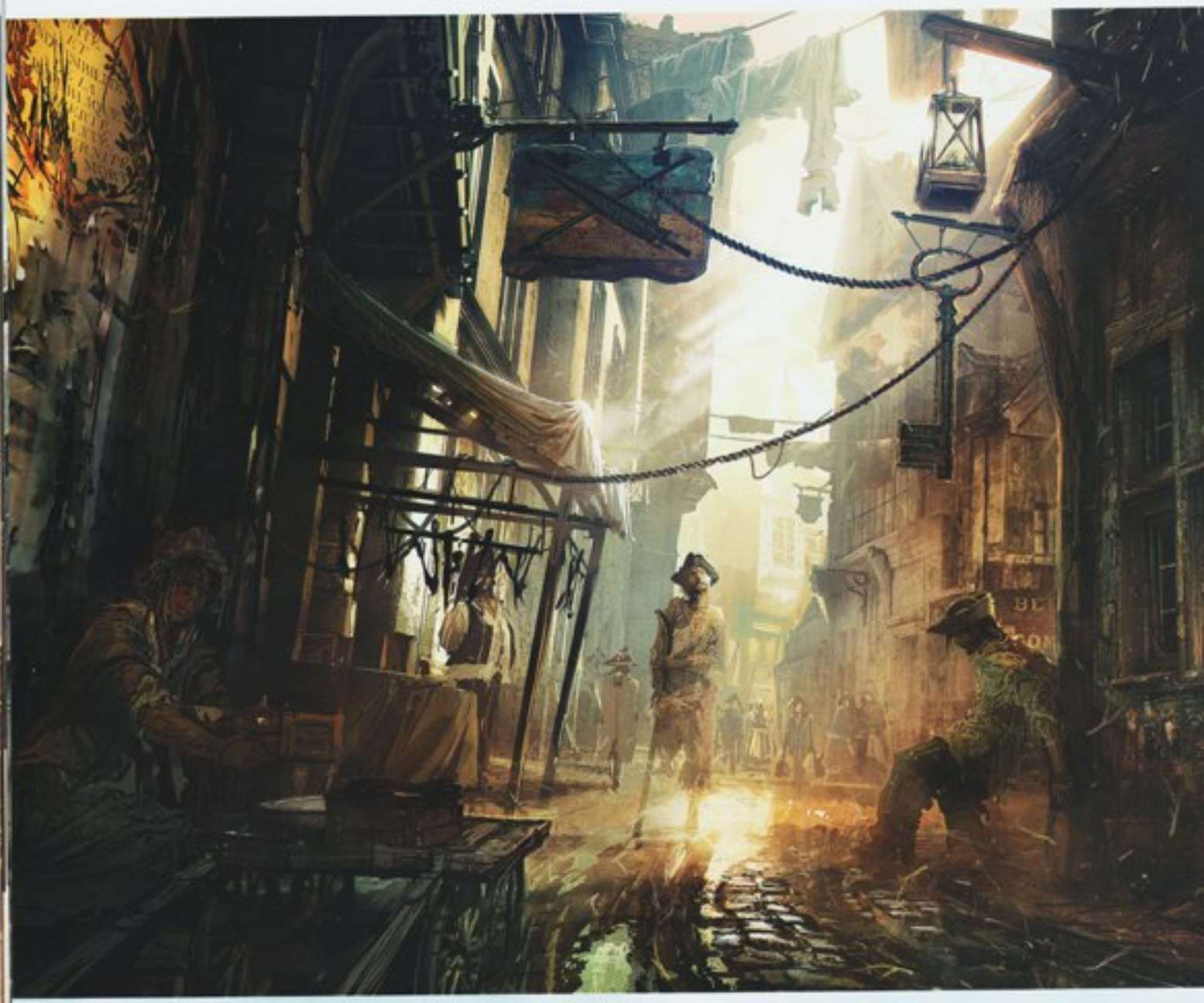
5 VENTRE DE PARIS

WELCOME TO 'THE BELLY OF PARIS', THE FIEFDOM OF THE KING OF BEGGARS AND PRELUDE TO A GORY SEQUENCE OF EVENTS THAT MAKE ARNO'S OWN BLOOD BOIL BEFORE SEEKING JUSTICE. ARTIST GILLES BELOEIL'S VIEW OF THE DISTANT NOTRE DAME TOWERS FROM A CROOKED ROOFTOP SPEAKS VOLUMES.

Here dwell the disillusioned people of Paris in whose hearts the revolution catches fire, providing the concept designers with arguably their most important task – to visually encapsulate at a glance so much desperation. Also so that Arno might appear as the shining hero among them. Throughout this chapter you should sense the fear but see the hope.



LEFT: "Early in the process, we had to show a very spiky and steamy horizon of Paris," Ludovic Ribardière says about first hurdles in the concept stages for *Assassin's Creed Unity*. If this were a movie it might open with this panoramic view of rooftops; smoking chimneys of bakeries making bread that those producing it cannot in fact afford. Cut to the squalor in the cobbled streets below.

MAN OF THE PEOPLE

POIGNANT SCENES OF the poorest district: a bakery just two doors down from an ale house where the starving might choose to at least drown their sorrows, and Arno Dorian striding purposefully for a rendezvous with his next unsuspecting target. Both created by Olivier Donato.

Arno certainly looks conspicuous on the prowl, and on one occasion uses what can be assumed to be a royalist guise to stir trouble as a distraction. His quest, though not completely at odds with the revolution, is first of all personal. Though his interventions, we are obliged to assume, do have a habit of changing the course of recorded history. Scholars might recognize the key moments during which this happens.

RIGHT: "I tried to imagine how can be the life at this period," says Ludovic Ribardière. "The smell, the noise in the street and lack of food are the first stigmas of the revolution. In this piece, the buildings are masking the sky, accentuating the feeling of oppression."

RIGHT: "La Touche's clinic, the butcher room shall we say! We needed to give the least welcoming vibe to this room! Feel that this room's purpose had less to do with medicine but more with torture... A seedy place that stinks of blood, mould, where silence precedes the cries of the poor wretches that were battered here under La Touche's orders, showed here getting a taste of his own medicine, questioned by Arno." *Stéphane Turgeon*

ABOVE: The backyard of the Hôtel de Ville, imagined in its 1794 straw-strewn state by Ludovic Ribardière. Arno's mission involves tracking Maximilien de Robespierre to his last refuge. Suffice to say that fate plays an invisible hand via the keen eyed, expertly trained Assassin at our disposal. Exploring the least attractive façade of this historic building is further evidence of the fulsome approach required to bring 18th century Paris to life in its entirety.

HÔTEL DE VILLE

THE MAIN ADMINISTRATIVE hall in Paris was infiltrated twice during the French Revolution, book-ending the key period between July 1789 and July 1794; marking the rise and fall of Maximilien de Robespierre. It was mobbed the first time around and somewhat officially breached the second.

Ubisoft's concept team, alongside narrative and game designers, take every opportunity to adjust history in line with *Assassin's Creed* lore. Eye witness accounts were often sketchy, even during principal moments, so filling the blanks need not always distort actual outcomes. Occasionally a person is not exactly where recorded in history books or a place is shifted slightly from the spot that it occupies in reality.

BELOW: "Marquis de Sade's den. Needing to be a parody of the Royal court and suggest the Marquis' perverted aristocratic nature, the image shows debauchery without taking the easy route of becoming obscene. Using unruliness, dirtiness and disillusionment as well as putting the bed in the center of the room, on a stage – my concept's central pillar. Also, I needed to have a goat in the image, so voila, goat on the bed; the cherry on the sundae!"
Stéphane Turgeon

LEFT: Arno Dorian peers into a drain, and we simultaneously want to know a) why, b) where and c) what for. We also fear for his safety having grown accustomed to his can-do company and charming wit. We have had all of this suggested to us by the combined efforts of the Ubisoft concept artists, scriptwriters, game designers and programmers. It's what makes the art of videogame creation so fantastically complex, and the savoring of its finest accomplishments so wonderful.

EAGLE VISION

IN CLOSING, AN example of the journey from concept sketch to something received as a living, breathing world in which to participate. First Olivier Donato's isolated city block from the slums, which observes the key pillars listed by Art Director Mohamed Gambouz (light, smoke, decay).

Félicien Nourry mocks-up a three-dimensional section for co-workers to toy with lighting and so on. Finally we are introduced to the performers: Arno, Élise, de Sade, whomever. All are present in compositions that fuel conversation about game direction and player experience. It gives somebody like Stéphane Turgeon permission to summarize: "an inspiring place, mix of mysticism and fanaticism, dodgy haunt of Paris's scum. Located in the heart of 'The Belly of Paris', the *cour des miracles* would be like its intestines..."

LE MARAIS

AS HOME TO THE PARISIAN ARISTOCRACY, LE MARAIS WAS A LUXURIOUS DISTRICT BY ANY STANDARDS IN THE 18TH CENTURY. EVEN ITS FAMOUS PRISON, THE BASTILLE, WAS CONSIDERED TO BE RELATIVELY COMFORTABLE, RETAINING WAYWARD NOBLEMEN, TROUBLESOME JOURNALISTS AND PORNOGRAPHERS.

Arno and Élise enjoy a reunion during festivities in the streets of Le Marais, the nature of their surroundings joyfully captured by artist Gilles Beloeil. They are able to put aside the struggles that brought them together, ignoring fates that lie waiting around the very next corner.

Speaking of destinies, the royal family that included King Louis XVI and his wife Marie Antoinette were held in the Temple prison before being guillotined. In this chapter the concept work inquires into Le Marais' jagged history.

ABOVE: "Since the conception phase we established a couple of high-level focus points for locations. Mainly these are regularly telling stories within and through environments; making them believable and emotionally involving. We also convey, as much as possible, the impression of a multi-layered city by introducing more indoor and underground areas with seamless access in and out. In doing so we avoid that feeling of playing only the shell of a city." *Mohamed Gamboux*

RIGHT: "Rich, wealthy, and carefree. The birds add a bit of chaos, I wanted that to show that things are going to change soon." *Gilles Beloeil*

OPPOSITE: "The pistol duel… a romantic instance of barbarism." *Ludovic Ribardière*

BASTILLE DAY

JULY 14, 1789. The storming of the Bastille is unquestionably the most well known event of the French Revolution. Not everyone could tell you what the Bastille in fact was, however, much less name the seven ragtag and rather aged occupants who made their escape amid the pandemonium.

While bringing the historic occasion to life with frightening intensity, Ubisoft's concept artists and game designers obliged themselves of some artistic license. Two of the seven prisoners become key players in the drama to come.

RIGHT: Having made his own exit from the blazing Bastille, the Assassin Arno Dorian enjoys the spectacle from his perch on Notre Dame. Martin Deschambault is able to suggest that this is a pivotal moment in the young man's journey, having not only gained a mentor, but also an unusual ally in the process. Various elements give the observer clues to Arno's whereabouts: the cathedral gargoyles, Tricolore flag atop the spire, and evidently some kind of distant stronghold.

"Germain's workshop (left) is half workshop, half boutique where the character is shown in his environment at work. Below is Germain's back shop and his private Templar ceremonial room that reveals his secret identity. This room needed to be as dark as this revelation, hiding his culpability. Below-left is Élise's dusty, abandoned house. I like this kind of 'old vampire manor' atmosphere – it was one of my inspirations to start my visual search." *Stéphane Turgeon*

PROVING GROUND

DURING THE EARLY stages of *Assassin's Creed Unity* our unlikely hero Arno wakes up to find he has been taken prisoner inside the Bastille. Among the historical personalities also present are the Marquis de Sade, François-Xavier de Whyte and Bernard LaRoche. All of them quite mad.

Little known to him at the time, a scuffle that breaks out between Arno and another prisoner becomes an impromptu audition for the Assassin's Brotherhood. Artist Félicien Nourry evocatively stages this necessary step toward Arno's transformation, light pours in from above flooding the arena for this pas de deux.

LEFT: Rioters become martyrs in Ludovic Ribardière's account of the storming of the Bastille. Despite inevitable casualties, the sans-culottes succeeded in overwhelming guards to claim arms and ammunition.

ABOVE: "We analyzed the different architectural characteristics of Paris. Because of technical and production limitations we only extracted the most recognizable visual statements, these we applied to our buildings and monuments. The same approach was used on props and furniture whether rococo, baroque or medieval." *Mohamed Gambouz*

OPPOSITE: "To allow an easy identification of the different areas in Paris, we try to find a particularity for each zone. Here, the religious area." *Ludovic Ribardiere*

ANOMALY: WORLD WAR 2

ONE ONLY NEEDS TO OBSERVE THE SKIES TO CONFIRM A 20TH CENTURY SETTING FOR THIS TIME ANOMALY. THAT THE FLYING MACHINES ARE GERMAN FIGHTER-BOMBERS CONFIRMS WARTIME EUROPE; NAZI OCCUPIED PARIS TO BE EXACT. WE GAZE SADLY ACROSS A PARIS MONUMENT TO PAST MILITARY GLORIES.

"I wanted a strong silhouetted image of the Vendôme Column and the crowd, with light coming toward us. It adds drama," says Gilles Beloeil of his concept featured above. It is also intended to signify oppression, the key motif of the World War II era outlined by Mohamed Gambouz.

Extreme contrast in the lighting technique mirrors the great distinction between glorious Belle Époque and the, by comparison, rural middle ages. Severity is another term that may also suit this collection of bleak concept sketches.

UNDER NAZI OCCUPATION

"I IMAGINED THE Paris streets during the occupation to be dark and gloomy, but with a bit of warmth here and there," offers Gilles Beloeil. Nazi swastikas draped from the terraces of bars and cafés rather put a dampener on an evening's merry making, however.

"A shared visual mantra for Paris under the occupation was to express an oppressed 'heavy' emotion," Patrick Ingolsby explains. "Paris was under someone else›s thumb and that had to feel heavy. Colors are subdued, while life on the street feels shadowy and mysterious. Meanwhile any light breaking through the heavy blanket of cloud provides hope. Lighting plays a key role in this regard during *Assassin's Creed Unity*." On something of a brighter note, we know too well that our Assassin will be turning these shadows to his great advantage. For Arno Dorian this is really another free-running paradise.

Platz kommandatur

LE LOUVRE

THOSE OF US THAT HAVE TOURED THE LOUVRE FOR ITS PRICELESS EXHIBITS MAY FIND IT EQUALLY THRILLING TO CHARGE DOWN ITS CORRIDORS AS A VENGEFUL ASSASSIN. IN FÉLICIEN NOURRY'S VISUALIZATION OF ARNO IN FLIGHT (ABOVE) WE SEE THE BLOODY OUTCOME OF A NATIONAL GUARD TAKEOVER.

Alongside fellow conceptual artists, Félicien brings to life scenarios within *Assassin's Creed Unity* before gameplay is finalized and the programmers have completed building the environments. Therefore this scene needs to function as a snapshot from the Artistic Director's mind's eye.

Equally arresting, at the opposite end of the spectrum, is the Ludovic Ribardière's unhappy account of the Revolution aftermath seen at street level. This contrast between rich and poor is explored across the following pages.

LEFT: In this sequence of sketches the topmost image indicates the narrative direction while those below show the scene from different angles. As series fans will know, Assassin's Creed gameplay celebrates free-running (parkour), which allows participants to observe Paris from above and below. Hence there is the necessity to make every location seem practical from many points of view.

CONTRASTING FORTUNES

GAZING DOWN THE length of Rue Pauvre toward a throng of fearful peasants, Félicien Nourry paints the squalid scene in a ghostly light. Across the page, Olivier Donato's representation of the famous barricades adds to the imagery of great personal sacrifices made in sight of freedom.

Mohamed Gambouz: "Paris of the French Revolution is a very rich and dense city. There is texture all over the place, with decaying walls or filthy street grounds. Contrast is established by the gap between social classes, giving a large palette of materials from crumbled painted stucco to lavish golden ornaments."

ABOVE: "The King's apartment in Tuileries Palace. Once again we needed space for a gameplay/fight zone, and for one or the other of these elements to reveal a hidden compartment in the hearth. The goal of this concept, based on factual reference material, was to validate our own spatial logic for all the gameplay elements and the cinematics. It was important to separate Napoléon and Arno, and that the safe's secret mechanism was near the entry so that Arno was logically confronting a soldier barging into the room while Napoléon takes the Eden Apple before activating a secret . . . [snip]" *Stéphane Turgeon*

LEFT: Members of the National Guard brandish their patriotic bayonets among the people of Paris waving Tricolore flags. Fires burn in the streets below violated abodes in close proximity to the Louvre. Barricades have been abandoned after serving their purpose in this volatile scene by Félicien Nourry.

BELOW: Heads waiting to roll under supervision of the National Guard. Hectic scenes such this crowd baying for blood are faithfully recreated in *Assassin's Creed Unity* owing to artificial intelligence technology. Concept sketches are used to plan the numbers required and how it will look most effective.

AUX BARRICADES!

THE STORMING OF Tuileries Palace is enthusiastically re-imagined by the Ubisoft concept artists. Borrowing from Eugène Delacroix's iconic 'Liberty Leading the People', though that painting celebrates the July Revolution of 1830 – three decades after events in *Assassin's Creed Unity*.

In the scene directly above the Swiss Guard is overwhelmed by *les enragés* in front of Tuileries Palace where Louis XVI attempts his second, and temporarily successful, escape from the vicinity. These chaotic events are another great opportunity for concept pieces to explore smoke and lighting effects amid failing natural light and the many fires burning. The art team also toyed with the kind of imagery you'd likely see in a present day broadcast, with an aerial view of the Revolution as though seen from a news media helicopter – following the trail of destruction from the backstreets.

QUARTIER LATIN

THE LATIN QUARTER, NAMED AFTER THE LANGUAGE MOST COMMONLY SPOKEN AMONG VISITING STUDENTS, COUNTS LUXEMBOURG PALACE AND THE PANTHEON AMONG ITS FAMOUS LANDMARKS. THE LATTER WAS NEARING COMPLETION AT THE START OF THE REVOLUTION AND IS USED BY ARNO AS A VANTAGE POINT.

With its ancient universities and religious monuments, including the early 17th century Sorbonne Chapel, the amount of heritage here was likely considered precious. The district escaped vandalism, making it a comparatively safe area for Templars to conduct their secret meetings.

Dominating this page is Félicien Nourry's idyllic Quartier Latin street scene, with no sign of the fury gaining momentum elsewhere. Luxembourg Palace (left) was a museum years before welcoming Napoléon Bonaparte as First Consul.

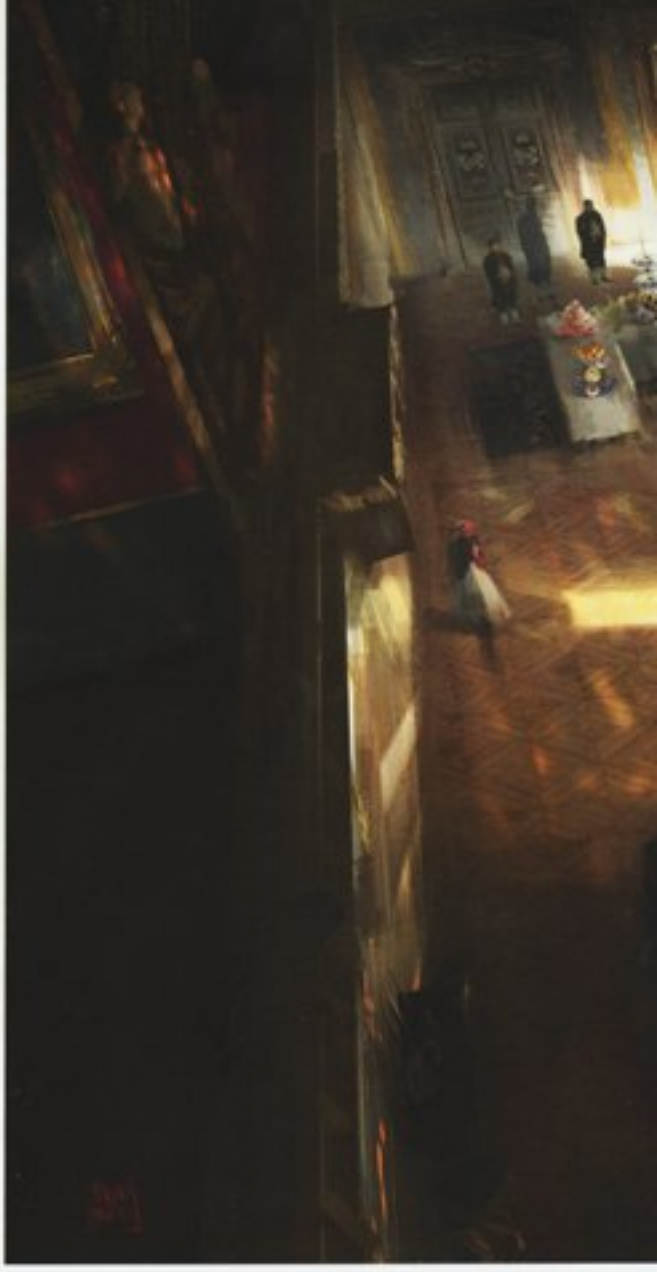
RIGHT: Tranquility. Gilles Beloeil establishes the Latin Quarter ambience that, during the entirety of *Assassin's Creed Unity*, remains largely undisturbed. The architecture points to the area's medieval origins, while the laundry out to dry strongly suggests life as usual. Shadows are long, however, which could mean that the day is only just beginning, and events are starting to unfold. Nonetheless, it looks like a fun place to explore while remaining out of sight.

SHADOW DANCING

WHEREAS LUDOVIC RIBARDIÈRE enthused about La Bièvre in terms of detail, Gilles Beloeil's nighttime rendition of the Latin Quarter explores mood. "This was just to set up the lighting we'd like to have at night in Paris' streets," says Gilles. Virtual 'set lighting' in other words.

Moonlight, torchlight and candlelight from within the peaceful abodes are all slightly refracted by dense smoke and the heavy evening atmosphere.

RIGHT: Interiors play an important role in *Assassin's Creed Unity*. Elevated levels of expression possible via new entertainment platforms allow even an empty to room to have presence. The textures are richer and more authentic, the detail more pronounced and the play of light capable of accentuating or playing down all of the above. Luxembourg Palace was already 150 years old during Arno's time, therefore a well-worn aspect was sought to represent this modest room.



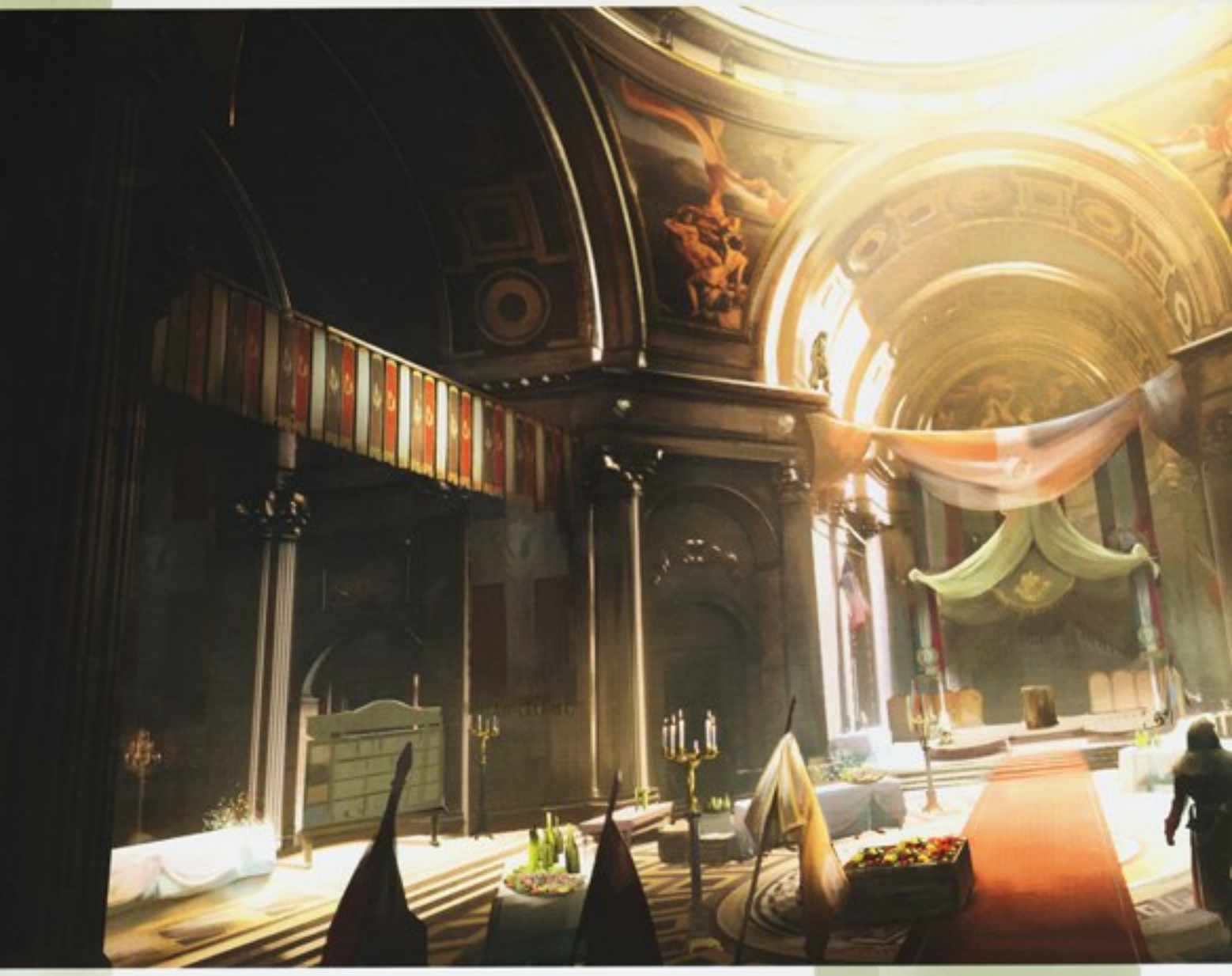
LUXEMBOURG PALACE

NACHO YAGÜE'S BALLROOM and trophy room portray Luxembourg Palace with all the lavishness we would expect to find. One can almost smell the mustiness from the mounted animals' heads and sweet scent of freshly polished floors and furniture, so tempting to explore.

Important spatial considerations are given to every interior, however, and you'll notice how the floor space dictates the possible routes for Arno.

ABOVE: "Using green vegetation as our accent color adds to the expression of new life and the hope for future generations of Paris," explains Patrick Ingolsby. "This is the iconic stamp in Quartier Latin's student residences." Nacho Yagüe also adds: "Some student revolts at the Quartier Latin. I wanted to show a spot where students gather to talk and discuss about the political situation. There are some hints of vandalism, plus graffiti and mocking elements on the statues."

LEFT: The Sorbonne Chapel rooftops are visible through the smoke across this courtyard scene by Maxime Desmettre.



ABOVE: Light from the royal chapel's famous dome illuminates this scene by Ubisoft's Nacho Yagüe, a Spanish artist based in Toronto. "I wanted to tell to the player that the building was still unfinished. Some of the murals were absent or in progress. As we wanted some cool navigation on the higher areas I added some scaffolding. Some of the sculptures are still wrapped."

ANOMALY: MEDIEVAL

DURING THE COURSE OF A PLAYER'S JOURNEY THROUGH *ASSASSIN'S CREED UNITY* THERE ARE OCCASIONS WHEN OTHER TIME PERIODS OVERLAP. UBISOFT'S ART DIRECTOR OF USER INTERFACE/EXPERIENCE, SHADI MALLAK, EXPLAINS: "MEMORIES ARE NOT PRECISE THINGS, THEY ARE DREAMLIKE, FLEETING."

"From the richness of the French Revolution and by including three other eras, we gained diversity," Mohamed Gambouz specifies. "Since the beginning we put a lot of focus on giving each of these eras a unique flavor; one that is compelling and that fits well within each context."

"These flavors translate into visual language through atmosphere, color palette, dominant shapes, composition etc. They are assigned as: French Revolution, Chaos; Belle Époque, Decadence; WW2, Oppression; and Medieval, Mysticism..."

RIGHT: Arno sprints across a moat to reach the Bastille in its original fortress guise. Artist Frank Kitson combines 'god rays' with intense white heat from the blaze, signifying destiny amid danger.

BASTILLE SAINT-ANTOINE

CONSTRUCTED DURING THE Hundred Years' War (1337-1453) to defend against the English, the Bastille (originally a crudely fortified ditch) eventually boasted eight towers. Its innovative design was widely copied, and it successfully protected the eastern approach to Paris at Porte Saint-Antoine.

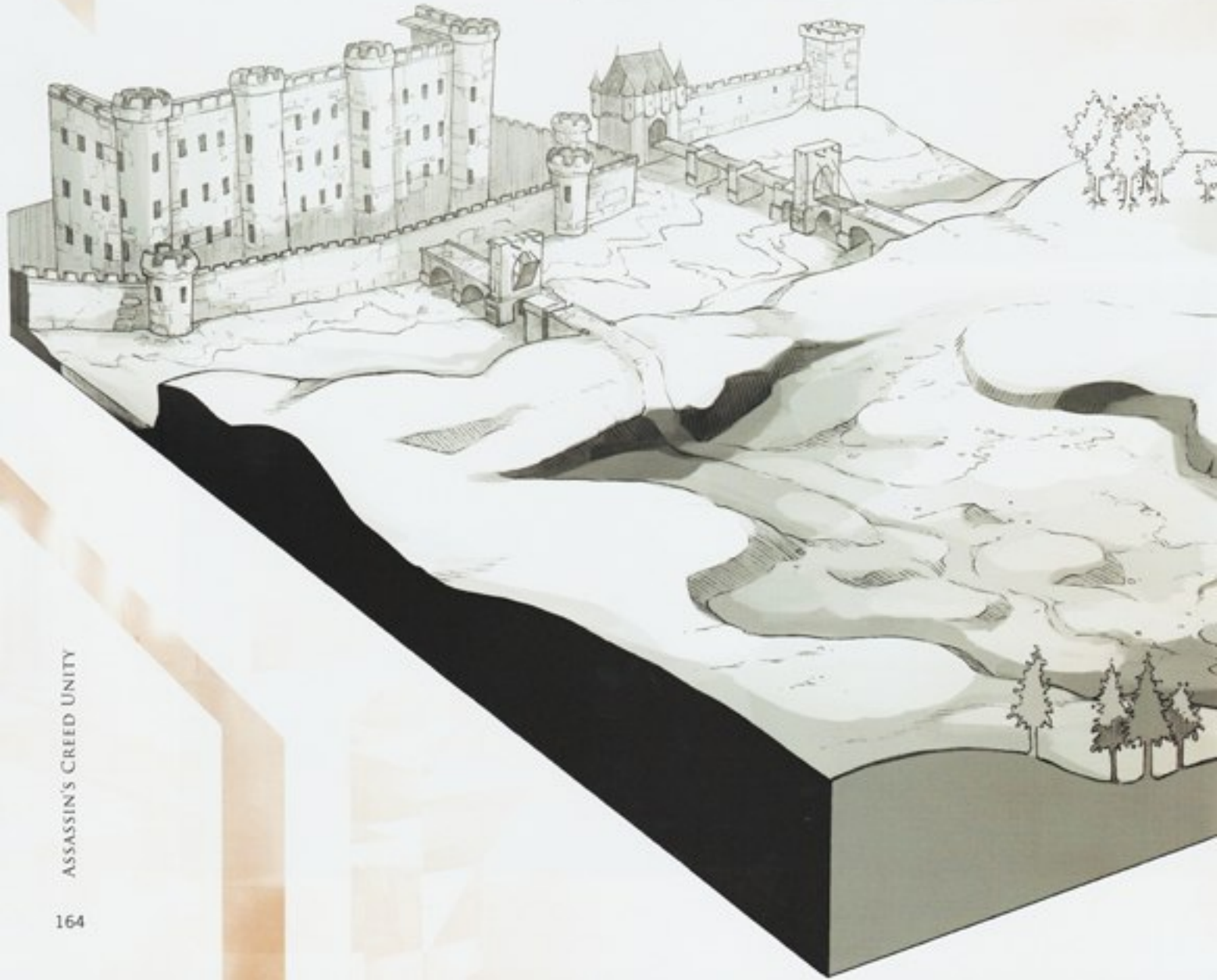
After enduring central roles in conflicts both internal and international, the Bastille's stone walls have suffered untold damage across the centuries. Senior concept artist Max Qin pays tribute to the eternal fortress (right) with his vision of medieval warfare, a time where such a stronghold appeared invincible to assailants.

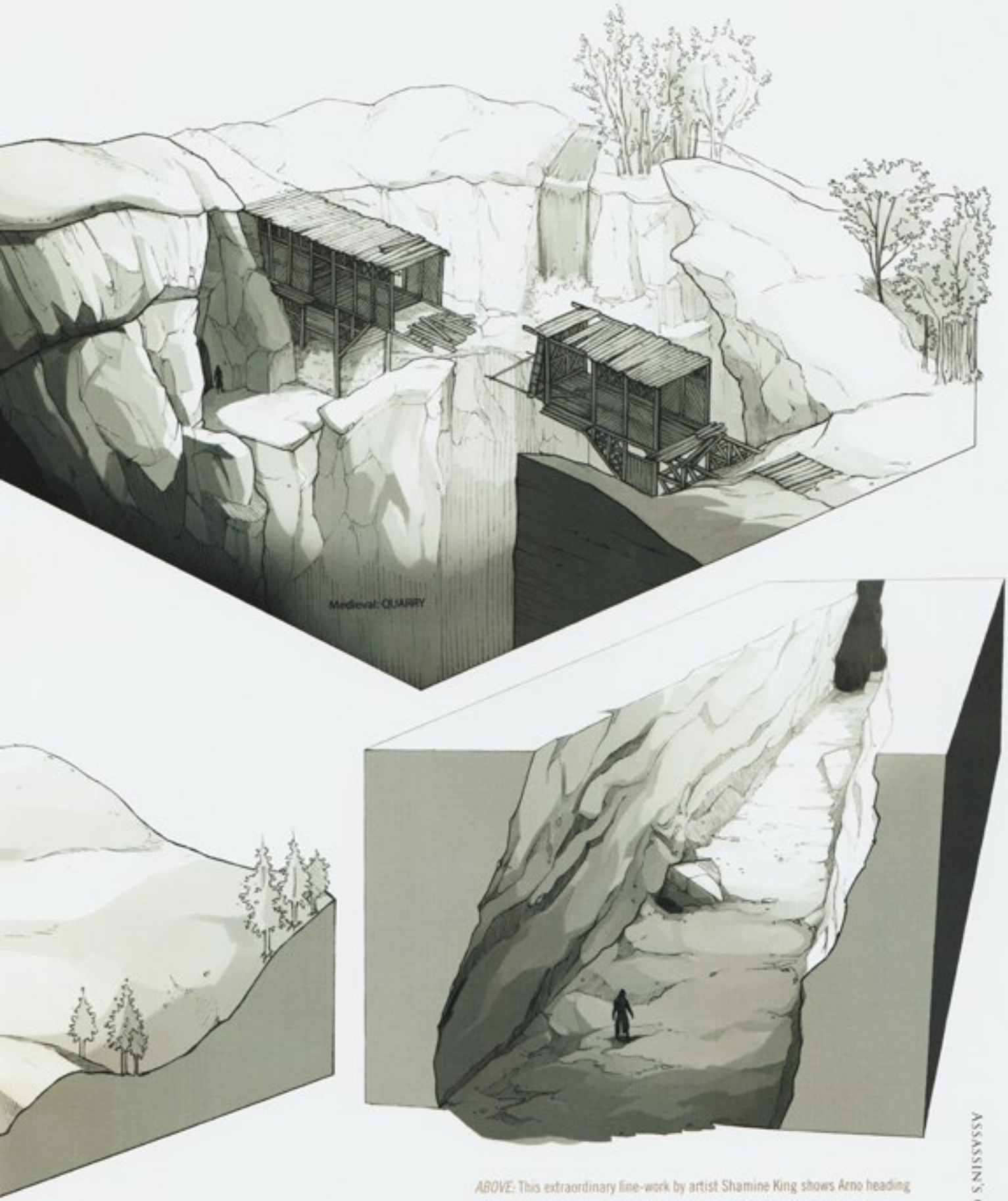
RIGHT: Arno traverses a landscape, lured toward underground temples of unknown origin, which appears to have only recently been tamed by the beginnings of civilization. An ancient stairwell is carved into stone and gods and angels are worshipped before an elegant subterranean alter. The area is silent, forsaken, but what was its purpose and who did it serve? Tony Zhou Shuo and Maxime Desmettre envisioned this enchanting episode.

MEDIEVAL BATTLEFIELD

A SERIES OF isometric views presents the Bastille in the early stages of development, together with the stone mines that built the city. The sketches serve as a series of dioramas upon which to plan the most fascinating routes for a curious and uncommonly agile medieval fellow.

Arno is a tiny figure wending his way through rough-hewn landscapes, beset by obstacles such as a wooden bridge under construction. An average mine worker would be dumbfounded by such terrain, but Arno is ever undeterred – we can visualize the steps he might take to traverse the waterfall, and then most likely choose the roof of the bridge to perform a gravity-defying leap across the limestone sinkhole. Transferrable skills, you might say.





ABOVE: This extraordinary line-work by artist Shamine King shows Arno heading into a quarry, his diminutive figure providing a sense of scale. Parts of these mines would later become the famous catacombs, renovated to incarcerate the remains of millions of people. The rest became miles of uncharted caverns and tunnels. The raw materials were used to construct much of medieval Paris.

MEETING AN EARLY GRAVE

BENEATH PARIS LIES approximately 280 kilometers of tunnels, the legacy of mining activity dating all the way back to the Antiquity. Careless extraction techniques made the network hazardous from the very beginning, but to Arno an irresistible challenge – the original urban explorer.

The underground network is off-limits to present day explorers, once again allowing artists such as Jan Urschel and Nick Tan to weigh in heavy with their imaginations. Arno is greeted by the grandiose alongside the grotesque, moments of arresting beauty ahead of heart-pounding claustrophobia. All the while we are never to lose sight of this sense of the mystical requested by Art Director Mohamed Gambouz; a paranormal quality effervescing in the underground streams, glistening off every rock and shimmering in the dim light. If there are feelings of trepidation, Arno is on the right trail.

LA BIÈVRE

DURING THE TIME OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION, LA BIÈVRE (BEAVER RIVER) WAS A HEAVILY POLLUTED AREA SERVING INDUSTRY WITH A METHOD OF TRANSPORTATION AND CONVENIENT DRAINAGE FOR THE TANNERIES. IN *ASSASSIN'S CREED UNITY* IT DEPICTS THE LEAST HOSPITABLE AREA POSSIBLE.

As a study, meanwhile, La Bièvre proved hugely inspiring though challenging for the concept designers. It is likely the most visually intense district in the city owing to the run-down nature of all the buildings, unruly presentation of its struggling inhabitants and fetid atmosphere.

"Since the very beginning there was a big focus on the details," informs Ludovic Ribardière. "With the dirt and mud, wooden scaffoldings, damaged walls and even the stench, this is a poisonous ambiance far from the King's party."

BEGGARS KINGDOM

GILLES BELOEIL INTRODUCES the district: "The air and the water seem polluted, the trees are dead and the people are poor, welcome to 'La Bièvre'!"

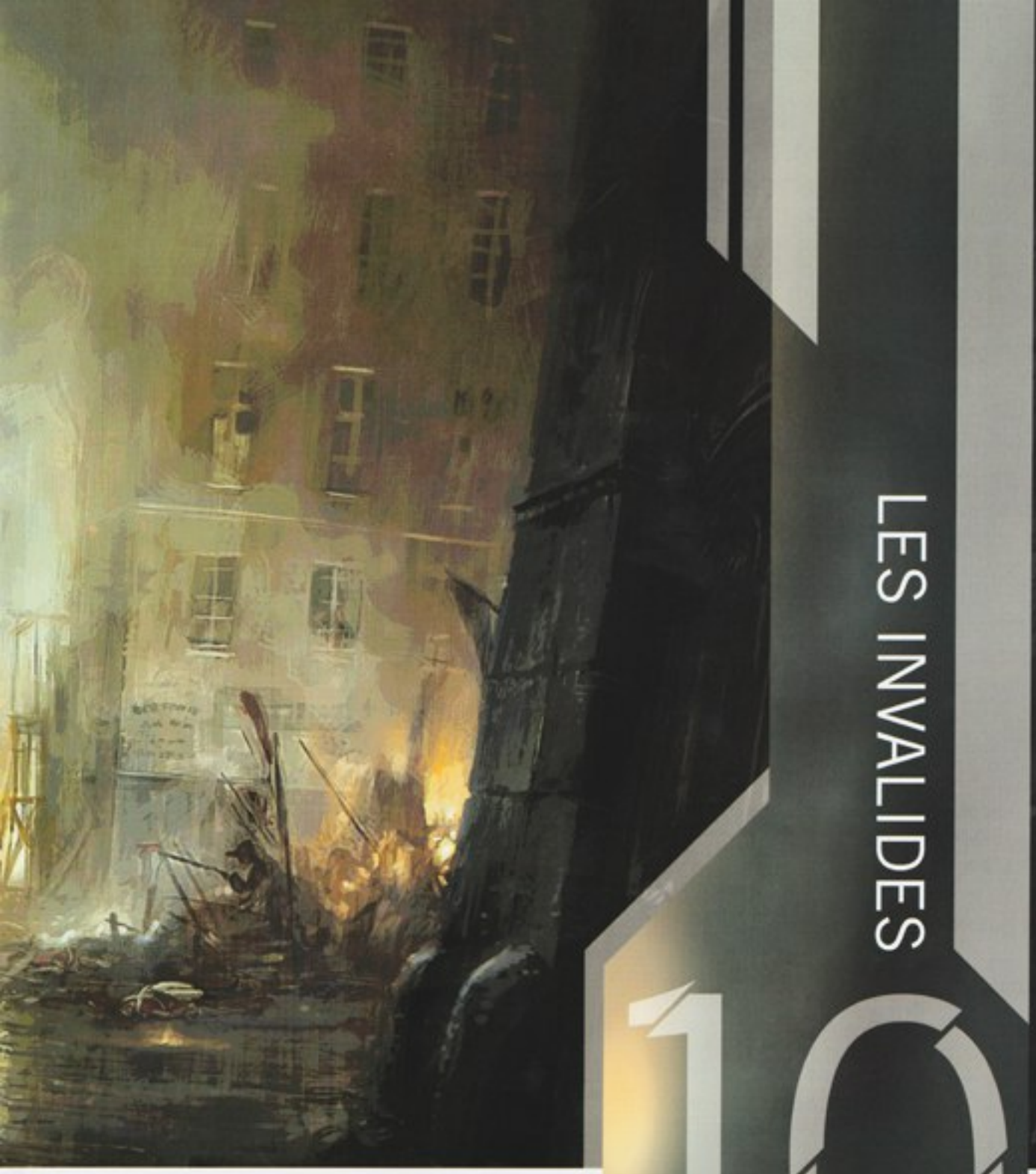
Maxime Desmettre explains the darker side: "Quays are lively by day, at night the theater of vices. Here a corpse is stolen from the Hotel-Dieu hospital for anatomy study."

HOUSE OF MATCHES

THIS TEMPLAR-CONTROLLED tannery presents a delightful free-running opportunity for Arno, its wooden construction also irresistible to a concept team expressing the light-restricted steam-filled spaces. Artist Olivier Donato composed one suffocating reference for level designers (above).

The tannery is also another fine example of how *Assassin's Creed Unity* grants the hero access to building interiors in addition to navigating rooftops and walls. Therefore concept work needs to describe the access points for ease of entry and exit, the latter is mission-critical here.

ABOVE: During this operation Arno makes an explosive impression with a special powder obtained from real-life 18th century chemist Antoine Lavoisier. Players are given the option to undertake missions using a stealthy or gung-ho approach, and here we see Arno sneaking up on a potential whistle-blower -- creaky floorboards disguised by a nearby water wheel. The grand design in this sequence is a stroke of genius, a lengthy, action-oriented set piece with a massive payoff.



10 LES INVALIDES

IN 1833, THE ROMANTIC PAINTER JMW TURNER IMMORTALIZED 'PARIS: LES INVALIDES FROM THE CHAMPS DE MARS'. JUST OVER HALF A CENTURY LATER, GUSTAVE EIFFEL GAVE PARISIANS THE BEST VIEW OF BOTH THE CHAMPS DE MARS AND LES INVALIDES FROM ATOP HIS SPECTACULAR TOWER.

And so more than 200 years later, Ubisoft artists picture how things might've appeared before rioters descended upon Les Invalides.

More intriguing than that, concept designers considered what may lie beneath the hospital for unwell and veteran soldiers. Given its military import, what clues might be found relating to the Assassin versus Templar struggle...

LEFT: "Les Invalides is about breaking vast landscapes of rural Paris with the Monumental Might of the Military Guard," suggests Patrick Ingoldsby. "Some of the most iconic landmarks in Paris's left bank regions were military owned. Back in rural times they were a large looming presence among the villages and surrounding farm lands."

CATACOMBS AND SEWERS

THE PARIS CATACOMBS and sewers are two highly evocative areas that may have you simultaneously reaching to cover your eyes and nose. For gameplay purposes the fetid sewers become a maze for Arno to navigate. The hazardous catacombs serve a heady mixture of romantic and the macabre.

Maxime Desmettre: "Paris's catacombs are known to easily cause visitors to lose their way. Though this trait is still depicted in my illustration (overleaf) I also wanted to add a romantic touch to the location, to encourage exploration and emphasize the adventurous feeling when being visited." Waiting for Arno at the end of his underground expedition is a character every bit as crooked and catastrophic, festering though oddly captivating as his habitat – La Roi des Thunes; The King of Beggars. The catacombs are a dumping ground for deceased members of his wretched workforce.

LEFT: Ludovic Ribardière describes his concept involving a collapsed road and carriage fallen into the catacombs as "a challenging one!" The scene graphically expounds on *Assassin's Creed Unity*'s theme of exploring 18th century Paris' hidden depths, ancient truths buried but not forgotten. The steps in Felicien Nourry's richly furnished cellar above lead directly to the sewers.

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Carsten Myhill – Brand Manager
Antoine Ceszynski – Brand Product Manager
Anouk Bachman – Brand Project Manager
Raphael Lacoste – Franchise Art Director

Studio Montréal

Mohamed Gambouz – Art Director
Vincent Gaigneux – Artist
Remko Troost – Artist
Gilles Beloeil – Artist
Félicien Nourry – Artist
Maxime Desmettre – Artist
Martin Deschambault – Artist
Ludovic Ribardière – Artist
Stéphane Turgeon – Artist
Olivier Donato – Artist
Jeff Simpson – Artist

Studio Toronto

Patrick Ingoldsby – Art Director
Branko Bistrovic – Artist
Nacho Yagüe – Artist

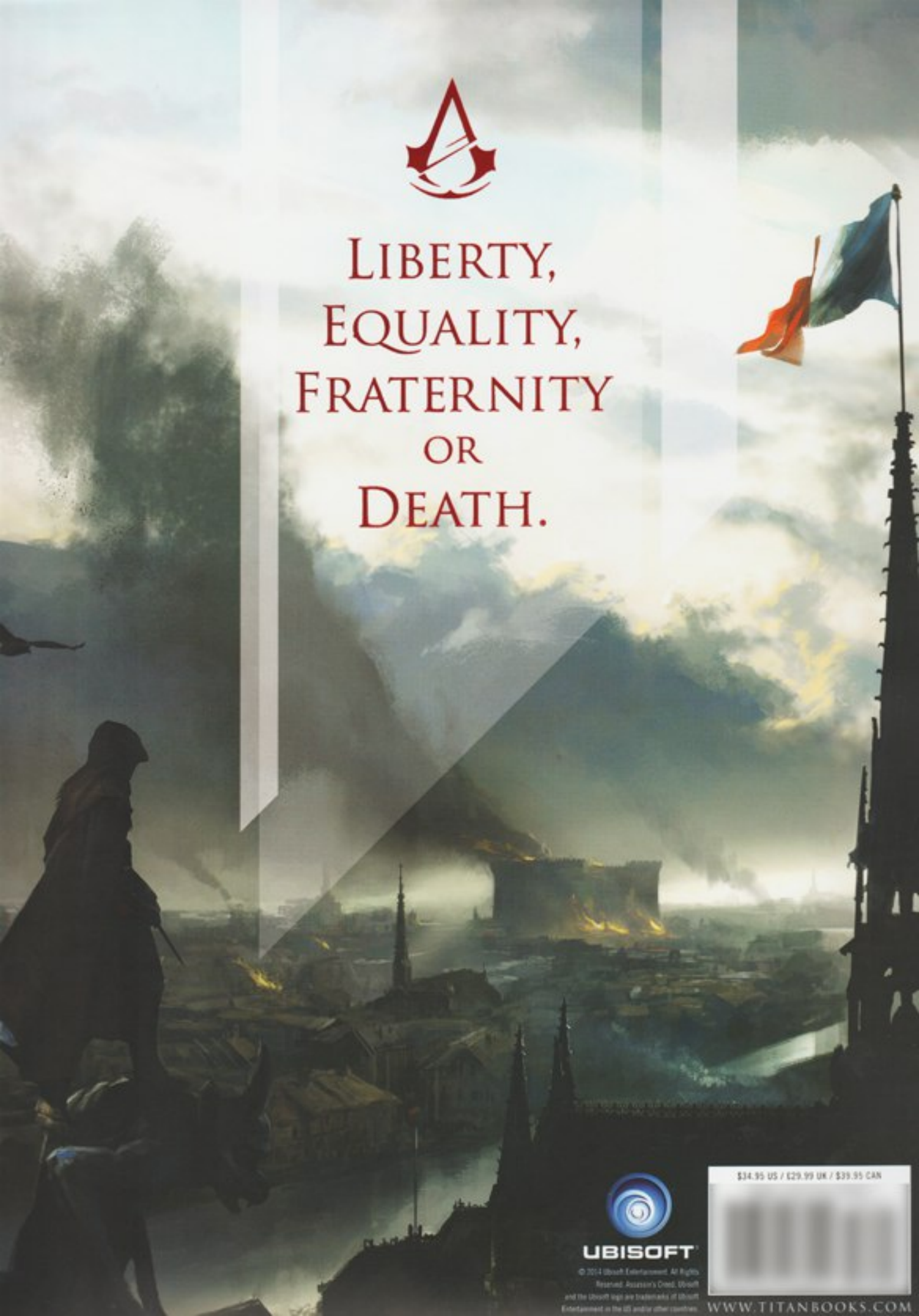
Studio Singapore

Frank Kitson – Art Director
Shamine King – Artist
Tony Zhou Shuo – Artist
Max Qin – Artist
Nick Tan – Artist

Studio Annecy

Nicolas Rivière – Lead Artist
David Alvarez – Artist
Pierre Bertin - Artist

SPECIAL THANKS to Beth Lewis
and the team at Titan Books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